



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

MS-13 GANG MEMBER ARRESTED BY ICE IN PROVIDENCE

Subject's brother also arrested and deported by ICE as MS-13 member

PROVIDENCE, RI—Special agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested a member of the violent “Mara Savatrucha” (MS-13) gang here Thursday.

Pedro Nimaja-Patzan, a 21-year-old citizen of Guatemala, was arrested and charged with immigration violations. Nimaja-Patzan is an admitted member of the MS-13 and is in the U.S. illegally. He has a criminal history that includes an arrest for domestic assault.

“Street gangs threaten the safety of our communities,” said Matthew J. Etre, interim special agent-in-charge of ICE in New England. “ICE works actively and aggressively with Rhode Island law enforcement partners to remove illegal alien gang members from our communities.”

The arrest of Nimaja-Patzan is the latest in Rhode Island under Operation Community Shield, an ICE national anti-gang initiative launched in March to target members of the MS-13. To date, ICE agents, working with federal, state and local law enforcement partners have arrested more than 400 MS-13 members nationwide. In Rhode Island, ICE special agents have arrested 25 MS-13 members since the launch of Operation Community Shield.

Operation Community Shield is designed to disrupt and dismantle violent gang organizations and to prosecute their members by employing the full range of authorities and investigative tools available to ICE. To accomplish this, ICE is employing its broad immigration authorities, both criminal and administrative, while at the same time, using its customs authorities to target narcotics smuggling and money laundering and to seek the forfeiture of assets.

Operation Community Shield draws on strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations. Locally, ICE has partnered with the Providence Police Department and the FBI in Rhode Island.

ICE has also taken several new steps to help other federal, state, and local agencies identify and target gang members. ICE's Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) in Vermont is playing a critical role in this effort. The center is running MS-13 gang member data provided by state and local law enforcement agencies through various ICE and Homeland Security databases to help these agencies identify and locate violent gang members.

ICE will also be working through its 54 Attaché offices overseas to cooperate with foreign governments that are also experiencing gang problems, particularly those in Central America.

Nimaja-Patzan is in ICE custody awaiting the outcome of his case.

Last week, ICE deported Nimaja-Patzan's brother, Rony Nimaja, also a member of MS-13. ICE special agents arrested Rony Nimaja on March 31, 2005 for immigration violations. He had a criminal history that included charges for assaulting a Providence police officer. He was ordered removed by an Immigration Judge and removed from the U.S. on June 30, 2005.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.